

Split Second Worksheet

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

The stasis in *Split Second* is in the life of a black police officer named Val Johnson in the city of Manhattan, New York. The play takes place from the 4th of July to July 6th in the “present day”; the play was written in 1981, so it probably was intended to be set around that time.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

The intrusion occurs when Val shoots a white man named William Willis because of the racist insults Willis has made against him.

3. What is the *unique factor*?

The unique factor is that this is the day that Val begins to become tired of the racist remarks made against him.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

The dramatic question is: Will Val ever tell the truth about what really happened on the night that he shot Willis?

5. Provide an illustration of the *two kinds of exposition* that the play has in it.

The type of exposition that all the characters know is that Val is a respected Vietnam veteran in the community. The exposition that only Val knows is what truly occurred on the night that he killed Willis.

6. Identify the most *theatrical moment* in the play and of what importance it seems to be.

The most theatrical moment of the play is the opening scene when Willis is insulting Val, and, as a result, Val shoots Willis.

7. List some of the *themes* of the play.

Racism
Justice
Man vs. Society

8. What do the principal characters *want* and what are some *obstacles* that stand in the way of them getting what they want?

Val wants to free himself from his situation, but his killing of Willis has caused him to have to be on trial for the murder, and the situation is one that he can't just escape easily.

9. Describe some possible *images* in the play and how does the *title* help us understand the play.

The image of Val's gun is a symbol of the quickness of Val's decision that changed his life. The title is also very symbolic because it alludes to the fact that Val's action was a split second one;; it shows how a quick decision has the power to drastically change a person's life.

10. Briefly define the *family relationships* that are examined in the play.

One family relationship that I found stood out was Val's relationship with his wife, Alea. She still loves him, despite what he's done; this shows the unconditional love that family members have for each other.